MULRAH: Microlite20 with Utilities Leveraging Role-playing Advancements Heuristically

MULRAH is a role-playing game that plugs indie-style rules (boxed text) into a modified Microlite20 (unboxed text), fully compatible with the Primary Fantasy SRD rules (see license). Optional rules/setting Modules can be grafted onto the Core Rules. Brackets [] indicate Endnotes.

Core Rules

Core Mechanic: Whenever the outcome of a task or conflict is uncertain, a player will roll a 20-sided die (d20) plus modifiers against a Difficulty Class (DC) for a Task or an opponent's d20 in a Conflict. Exceeding the DC or the opponent's roll(s) indicates success. Modifiers usually include the relevant Stat, bonuses from Skills/Abilities/Aspects, and situational bonuses/penalties, all described below.

Player Characters (PCs) start at **Level 1** with **3 Stats**, a **Skill Expertise, 2 Abilities, 1 Aspect** (optional), and **2 Keys.**

Setting-Based Character Creation has players build their Characters as the GM describes the recent history of the setting. During each historical period the GM demarcates, players describe what their character was doing and pick one of 5 traits (Skill Expertise, 2 Abilities, 2 Keys) their Character gained as a result of their activities.

Stats are Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX) and Mind (MIND). Roll 2d4-4, assign to a Stat, and then repeat [1]. Secondary Stats are:

- **Hit Points (HP)** = d8 + STR per Level. If HP reach 0, the Character falls unconscious and must make a Fortitude Save every round to avoid death. HP lost due to wounds recovers at a rate equal to 1/2 Character Level (round up) per night of rest.

- **Sanity Points (SP)** = 8 + MIND + Level/2. Whenever a Character has a horrific experience, he must roll lower than his SP on a d20 or lose a SP. When SP reach 0, he goes permanently insane.

Final Stand kicks in at the player's request when her Character reaches 0 HP. Upon regaining consciousness, her Character remains at 1 HP and recedes, unable to attack or be harmed, into the background. In a final, climactic encounter that the player chooses as her Character's "final stand," the Character instantly regains all HP and doubles all roll bonuses. At the end of the encounter, the Character must retire.

Skills provide a +4 bonus to any related Tasks. Each Character can have one Skill, reflecting his background. Players are free to create a Skill based on any profession, craft, or upbringing, but the following four are the default starting points, each with a handful of associated Skills from the Primary Fantasy SRD and other sources. [2] Tally failures in each Skill, and, at the end of each session, roll a d20 against the accumulated tally. If the roll is less than or equal to the tally, then the Character has learned from the failures and gains +1 in that Skill; reset tally.

MULRAH Skill	Primary SRD or Other Skills (Stat)
Knowledge	Appraise (MIND), Decipher Script (MIND), Knowledge (MIND; pick type), Literacy (MIND), Research (MIND)
Survival	Handle Animal (MIND/STR), Heal (MIND), Ride (DEX), Swim (STR), Survival (MIND)
Physical	Balance (DEX), Climb (DEX/STR), Jump (DEX/STR), Swim (STR), Tumble (DEX)
Subterfuge	Disable Device (MIND/DEX), Escape Artist (DEX/STR), Forgery (DEX), Gambling (MIND) Open Lock (DEX), Sleight of Hand (DEX)

Story-oriented or "old school" groups may wish to ignore rolling dice to determine the outcome of discrete Tasks, focusing instead on Conflicts (below) or player skill (e.g., describing exactly how and where you are looking for traps rather than just rolling for it), respectively. If you are using Skills, the following two options can substantially enhance their enactment in the game.

- **Stakes:** Failing at a Task leads to d6 Damage or a Mild Wound (see below) *but not necessarily failure of the task itself.* A Natural 1 causes double Damage or a Moderate Wound. Failing a roll to climb a wall could mean the Character takes damage or loses her grappling hook, but still makes it to the top.
- **Skill Challenges** are useful for engaging the entire party in striving toward a common goal. Success requires that players complete (2 + 2 x Complexity) Tasks successfully before failing 3 times. GM selects Complexity (1 to 5). DC = EL + Base (5 - Easy, 10 - Medium, 15 - Hard).

Conflicts begin whenever one Character attempts to avoid, influence, change, or harm another Character. The group agrees upon what the Conflict will decide; these are the Stakes. Some Conflicts are best approached with prior Preparation (sneaking, scouting). Many Conflicts then start with Talking (bluffing, persuading, taunting, etc.), but can also start with or **Escalate** into Physical conflict (intimidating, shoving, punching, etc.) or even Combat (fighting with weapons). To resolve a Conflict, the opposing sides roll a d20, add relevant Stats, Abilities (see below), and situational modifiers. Unless one side chooses to Escalate or begin Pain (see below), the higher total wins the Stakes, and ties go against the instigator.

Conflicts between two or more characters are resolved with a quick d20 roll for each side (not each character), plus the relevant Stat and Ability (see below) of the lead character as well any situational modifiers based on help from other characters, the environment, etc. The side with the higher total wins, and ties go against the instigator. This applies to any kind of conflict (avoiding, talking, physical, combat). The lead character of a side that loses by 4 or more must take a Consequence (see below) and, when appropriate, Damage to Hit Points (based on (the weapon type + STR - opponent's Armor Bonus) x 2 for 2-handed weapons or if snuck up on). Conflicts can be extended in two ways:

1 **Escalation:** Any character can shift from one type of four types of conflict to another. All d20s are immediately rerolled, and this character becomes the instigator. The types of Conflict include Preparation (sneaking, scouting), Talking (bluffing, persuading, taunting, etc.), Physical conflict (intimidating, shoving, punching, etc.), and Combat (fighting with weapons).

2 **Pain:** Only at a player's (not the GM's) request, a Conflict can be handled in a task-by-task manner. In this case, each individual rolls a d20 for each action, modified as above but compared to a static target number of 10 + the opponent's relevant modifiers. Success costs the opponent a Consequence *or*, when appropriate, damage to Hit Points.

Abilities provide bonuses during Conflicts and improve as a Character Levels. Players select two Abilities for each Character by combining a Conflict Type with a Style. A Character who takes the exact same Ability twice can either have the bonuses stack or gain an extra action per Round, as long as that action is related to the Ability.

Conflict Type: Any Character participate in any type of Conflict, but each Character has one or two areas in which she excels.

1. **Stealth:** Notice, avoid, or otherwise minimize the risk of a Conflict before it begins; includes Disguise, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Search, etc.
2. **Communication:** Talk through a Conflict; includes Diplomacy, Intimidation, persuasion, taunting, etc.

3. **Brawling:** Fighting without weapons; includes brawling, kicking, punching, wrestling, etc.
4. **Combat:** Fighting with weapons; includes swords, knives, bows, shields, etc.

Style indicates the type of bonus the Character gets.

- **Aggressor:** Add Level to all Attacks.
- **Defender:** Add Level to all Defense.
- **Specialist:** Select a specific discipline within the Conflict Type (e.g., Taunting, Kung Fu, Crossbows, etc.) and add Level to both Attacks and Defense only when engaged in this specific Conflict.
- **Opportunitist**: Reroll up to Level/2 times per game session.
- **Hero:** Add Level to any roll once per Conflict; add twice Level to any roll once per game session.

Aspects are non-mechanical parts of a Character that a player wants to influence the story. An epithet, quote, relationship, possession, or anything else can be an Aspect. Characters start with one Aspect in the 1st Level and can gain more with Leveling Bonuses. For each Aspect, a player gets a Story Point (perhaps measured with a poker chip or other counter) at the beginning of each session. At any time during the session, the player may invoke an Aspect prior to any die roll by describing how it comes into play and spending a Story Point, thereby gaining a +4 to the roll. The GM or any other player may also invoke that Character's Aspect (s). If the player refuses, then she must spend a Story Point; if she accepts, then she gains a Story Point.

Consequences are types of Aspects and can be taken (up to four at once) instead of any major hit to HP or SP. Alternatively, they can be a -1 to a Stat of the player's choice.

- **1st Consequence** = Mild Wound or Short-Term Insanity. can absorb loss of up to 1/4 HP or SP, fades upon winning a Conflict.
- **2nd Consequence** = Moderate Wound or Long-Term Insanity, can absorb loss of up to 1/2 HP or SP, fades with a night's rest.
- **3rd Consequence** = Severe Wound or Long-Term Insanity, requiring 2d6-4 weeks to heal; 0 = 6 days, -1 = 5 days, -2 = 4 days, -3 = 3 days; can absorb loss up to 3/4 HP or SP.
- **4th Consequence** = Permanent Wound or Indefinite Insanity, only removed with magic or other extraordinary measure.

Keys are goals for which characters gain Experience Points (XP) when they accomplish them. Each Character has two Keys and may (optionally) change one every 5th Level. Three Keys inspired by various editions of the Primary Fantasy SRD are below. See Sweet20 for more.

- **The Key of Glittering Gold** gives 1 XP for every 100 gp the Character gains, divided by his Level.
- **The Key of Conquest** garners 1 XP for each HD or Level of opponent defeated plus 1 XP for each doubling of foes. Divide sum by Character's Level.
- **Keys of Alignment** (Law vs. Chaos, Good vs. Evil) act like the Key of Bloodlust but earn double the XP for defeating foes of the opposite Alignment and none for those of the same Alignment.

- **The Key of Conflict** provides 1 XP for every Consequence taken over the course of a session.
- **The Key of Challenge** provides 1 XP for every Complexity Level in each Skill Challenge the PCs overcome.

Level Advancement occurs when the XP equals 15 [4]. Reset XP to 0 after advancing. With a new Level, gain (d8+STR) HP. Every 3 Levels, a Character gains a **Leveling Bonus**, which allows him to add +1 to a Stat or gain a new Aspect. A Character can save her Leveling Bonuses and then use two of them (at 6th, 12th, etc. Level) to gain a new Ability, essentially "multi-classing."

Magic

Divine Magics (Ability) provide access to Divine Spells of 1/2 the caster's Level and Turning Undead. Each spell costs HP = 1 + 2 x the Spell's Level, a loss that can be healed **only** after 8 hours rest. A player-chosen "signature spell" for each Spell Level above 0th costs 1 less HP. Turn Undead requires a successful Magic Attack and can be used (2 + Level + MIND) times per day. DC is the current HPs of the Undead, destroyed if DC exceeded by 10. Casters cannot use two weapons at once.

Alchemy (Ability) is a Goblin method of accessing Arcane Spells. With access to water, Alchemist's Ingredients (5 gp per use per Level), and a successful roll of d20+Level+MIND vs a DC of 10 + 5 x Spell Level, an Alchemist can create potions for spells of a Spell Level up to 1/2 the Alchemist's Level. These potions can be used up to 24 hours after their creation; creating a potion with no expiration adds 25 to the DC. Each subsequent potion created in a day adds +2 to the DC. Gain +2 bonus to potion creation every 3rd Level. Goblins only.

The World Beyond

All PCs in the World Beyond must select a Race, Religion, and Nationality. Races besides Humans/Goblins are rare and at -1 to Skills.

- **Humans** have spread their religion through out most of Ytarria. Three Christian nations (Megalos, Caithness, Cardiel, and Araterre) and two Muslim nations--al-Wazif (Sunni) and al-Haz (Shi'ite)--exist. Judaism is the third most common religion, but Jews are spread among the six kingdoms. The Megalan Empire's closest rival is al-Wazif, with Cardiel being a much-disputed realm with a diverse, relatively egalitarian society. Caithness is a sparsely populated frontier with weak mana (and thus no magical characters) to the West, and Araterre is an island nation of seafarers to the South.
- **Goblins** (-2 STR, +1 DEX, +1 MIND, +1 Skills) are the second most populous Race on Yrth and comprise a substantial portion of the mercantile class in most cities, particularly in southern Megalos (Yibyorak and Sho'joor). Most have assimilated to the prevailing religion of the surrounding Humans (Christianity, Islam, Judaism), but a rare few follow cult deities of their former world.
- **Twadyn/"Gnomes"** and **Halflings** (+1 DEX) are surface-dwelling herders or farmers. They live peacefully alongside Humans and Goblins, usually in rural areas. Many have difficulty distinguishing between the Elder Race of Gnomes and Halfling newcomers. The former tends to live near their Dwarven cousins in Zarak and worship the ancient elemental deities Hubabeh (Air) and Hsaragg (Water), while the latter hail from the slightly warmer, weed-growing climates of Megalos, where Christianity is prevalent.
- **Reptile-Men** (+2 STR, -1 MIND) are most prevalent in the Steppes of Arachine but can be found in any plain or swamp area. Little is known of the religious ways of most Reptile Men. Descendants of those who assimilated with Human nomads in the early days of Islam live alongside Humans in the Muslim nations.

Endnotes

1. To convert from the Primary Fantasy SRD rules, use the relevant Ability Score's bonus. From older versions, Stat = (Relevant Ability Score - 10)/2.
2. Note that MULRAH splits Microlite20‘s Subterfuge Skill between the Subterfuge Skill and the Stealth Ability. Microlite20‘s Communication Skill is now an Ability.
3. In MULRAH, anybody can try to sneak up on someone, but only those with Stealth will have any real success.
4. This amount is calibrated to the XP amounts (divided by 100) in Erin Smale's "Building the Perfect Class." All Characters have the same progression of Hit Points (d8 per Level = 2 XP) and weapon/armor restrictions; none progress in "Saving Throws" or Combat outside of Abilities. Abilities are essentially a Combat Progression of +1/Level, worth 4 XP, slightly more than Smale’s Special I/II abilities. Thieves' Skills, which include about twice the number of skills as a MULRAH Skill, are worth 4 XP in Smale's calculation, so MULRAH Skills count for just 2 XP. Leveling Bonuses are worth 4 XP.

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